IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please amend paragraph [0003] as follows:

[0003] The term "therapeutic agent" as used herein includes one or more "therapeutic agents" or "drugs". The terms "therapeutic agents" and "drugs" are used interchangeably herein and include pharmaceutically active compounds, nucleic acids with and without carrier vectors such as lipids, compacting agents (such as histones), virus (such as adenovirus, ~~andenoassociated~~ adenoassociated virus, retrovirus, lentivirus and α-virus), polymers, hyaluronic acid, proteins, cells and the like, with or without targeting sequences.

Please amend paragraph [0004] as follows:

[0004] Specific examples of therapeutic agents used in conjunction with the present invention include, for example, pharmaceutically active compounds, proteins, cells, oligonucleotides, ribozymes, anti-sense oligonucleotides, DNA compacting agents, gene/vector systems (i.e., any vehicle that allows for the uptake and expression of nucleic acids), nucleic acids (including, for example, recombinant nucleic acids; naked DNA, cDNA, RNA; genomic DNA, cDNA or RNA in a non-infectious vector or in a viral vector and which further may have attached peptide targeting sequences; antisense nucleic acid (RNA or DNA); and DNA chimeras which include gene sequences and encoding for ferry proteins such as membrane translocating sequences ("MTS") and herpes simplex virus-1 ("VP22")), and ~~viral, liposomes~~ viral liposomes and cationic and anionic polymers and neutral polymers that are selected from a number of types depending on the desired application. Non-limiting examples of virus vectors or vectors derived from viral sources include adenoviral vectors, herpes simplex vectors, papilloma vectors, adeno-associated vectors, retroviral vectors, and the like. Non-limiting examples of biologically active solutes include anti-thrombogenic agents such as heparin, heparin derivatives, urokinase, and PPACK (dextrophenylalanine proline arginine chloromethylketone); antioxidants such as probucol and retinoic acid; angiogenic and anti-angiogenic agents and factors; anti-proliferative agents such as enoxaprin, angiopeptin, rapamycin, monoclonal antibodies capable of blocking smooth muscle cell proliferation, hirudin, and acetylsalicylic acid; anti-inflammatory agents such as dexamethasone, prednisolone, corticosterone, budesonide, estrogen, sulfasalazine, acetyl salicylic acid, and mesalamine; calcium entry blockers such as verapamil, diltiazem and

nifedipine; antineoplastic / antiproliferative / anti-mitotic agents such as paclitaxel, 5-fluorouracil, methotrexate, doxorubicin, daunorubicin, cyclosporine, cisplatin, vinblastine, vincristine, epothilones, endostatin, angiostatin and thymidine kinase inhibitors; antimicrobials such as triclosan, cephalosporins, aminoglycosides, and ~~nitorfurantoin~~ nitrofurantoin; anesthetic agents such as lidocaine, bupivacaine, and ropivacaine; nitric oxide (NO) donors such as ~~lisidomine~~ linsidomine, molsidomine, L-arginine, NO-protein adducts, NO-carbohydrate adducts, polymeric or oligomeric NO adducts; anti-coagulants such as D-Phe-Pro-Arg chloromethyl ketone, an RGD peptide-containing compound, heparin, antithrombin compounds, platelet receptor antagonists, anti-thrombin antibodies, anti-platelet receptor antibodies, enoxaparin, hirudin, ~~Warafin~~ Warfarin sodium, Dicumarol, aspirin, prostaglandin inhibitors, platelet inhibitors and tick antiplatelet factors; vascular cell growth promoters such as growth factors, growth factor receptor antagonists, transcriptional activators, and translational promoters; vascular cell growth inhibitors such as growth factor inhibitors, growth factor receptor antagonists, transcriptional repressors, translational repressors, replication inhibitors, inhibitory antibodies, antibodies directed against growth factors, bifunctional molecules consisting of a growth factor and a cytotoxin, bifunctional molecules consisting of an antibody and a cytotoxin; cholesterol-lowering agents; vasodilating agents; agents which interfere with ~~endogeneus vascoactive~~ endogenous vasoactive mechanisms; survival genes which protect against cell death, such as anti-apoptotic Bcl-2 family factors and Akt kinase; and combinations thereof. Cells can be of human origin (autologous or allogenic) or from an animal source (xenogeneic), genetically engineered if desired to deliver proteins of interest at the insertion site. Any modifications are routinely made by one skilled in the art.

Please amend paragraph [0023] as follows:

[0023] The apparatus used to selectively ablate the coating material in region 3 of stent 1 in accordance with some embodiments of the invention is described as follows. As shown in Fig. 3, stent 1 has been placed on a stent holder 7 and is retained on holder 7 by a retaining bar 8. The stent holder may be one of a variety of stent ~~holders~~ holder designs, as long as the stent holder does not substantially interfere with the ablation of coating from the selected target areas on the stent. Preferably, the stent holder is a design suitable for high speed automated stent processing, such as the shaped-wire stent holders described in U.S. Patent Application No.

10/198094, in order to facilitate use of the present invention in an automated stent manufacturing facility. Further, in order to minimize stent handling during a multi-step automated stent manufacturing process, stent 1 may be introduced to a laser ablation portion of the manufacturing process on same stent holder 7 on which it was previously held for coating application and coating drying.

Please amend paragraph [0026] as follows:

[0026] In addition to the stent rotating and orienting apparatus, there is provided a laser and laser orienting mechanism to permit application of laser light energy to the desired target areas on the stent. In Fig. 3, laser 12 is mounted in a laser mounting base 13. In this first embodiment, laser 12 is held in a fixed orientation relative to the longitudinal axis of stent 1, such that the light energy emitted from the laser will strike the selected portion 3 of stent 1 from which the coating composition is to be removed when these stent lattice links 2 rotate through the laser light path. The laser in this embodiment is ~~an~~ a xenon chloride (XeCl) excimer laser operating in the UV range. Exemplary equipment includes a model IPEX 800 series excimer laser system available from GSI Lumonics of Billerica, MA. Satisfactory coating ablation performance has been observed with the laser operating on XeCl transition at 308 nm in a pulse mode with a repetition rate of approximately 200 firings per second (i.e., about 200 Hz), power level at approximately 40 Watts, and approximately 20 pulses of laser light energy deposited at each location within the selected ablation portion covered by the laser beam at a 5:1 demagnification. It will be appreciated that these laser operating parameters may be varied considerably, for example, by use of a krypton fluoride (KrFl) laser operating at 248 nm, or other lasers, such as YAG or CO_2 lasers, as long as the laser can achieve the desired coating removal without significant damage to adjacent portions of the coating or the medical device itself.

Please amend paragraph [0034] as follows:

[0034] Once the amount of surface area of coating to be ablated from the stent has been determined, motion controller 10 and laser controller 14 may be operated to cause laser 12 to ablate a selected portion of the coating, where the selected portion includes the amount of surface area corresponding to the surface area required to be removed to reach the target coating weight, distributed over the surface of the stent coating in accordance with a predetermined pattern. For

example, laser controller 14 may be programmed to remove coating material from the outer surface of the stent lattice links starting from a first end of the stent and progressing toward the other end until sufficient coating has been removed to achieve the target coating weight. Alternatively, the desired amount of coating ablation may be distributed over a plurality of surfaces on the medical device. Moreover, the ablation pattern need not be limited to complete ablation of the coating material within a region of the stent coating, but may include the use of laser 12 with highly ~~focussed~~ focused laser beam pulses to ablate small holes in the coating on individual lattice links, such as the pattern of holes 16 shown in coating 6 in Fig. 5 (illustrating only the outer surface coating layer). The selected ablation to achieve the target coating weight could also be performed in a manner that varies the spot dosage of therapeutic material delivered by the finished device, for example, by ablating coating from the middle of the device rather than the ends to provide maximum dosage in the regions near the ends of the device.